

REMARKS

Claims 1-52 are pending. Of those claims, Claims 1-17 and 26-52 are withdrawn from consideration. An Office Action mailed December 22, 2005 rejected Claims 18 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). The Office Action also objected to Claims 19-24 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but stated they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. By way of this amendment, Applicant hereby cancels Claim 18 and amends Claims 19 and 25. Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.111, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the Application.

OBJECTION TO CLAIMS 19-24

The Office Action objected to Claims 19-24 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but stated they would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant amends Claim 19 to be in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim. Since Claim 19 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and there were no intervening claims, Claim 19 is now allowable. Because Claims 20-24 depend from an allowable independent claim, they are allowable for the same reasons that make the corresponding independent claim allowable.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS 18 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Office Action rejected Claims 18 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Girardi et al. (Girardi), US 6,488,249. Applicant cancels Claim 18 and amends Claim 25 to depend from currently amended allowable independent Claim 19, thereby rendering this rejection moot. Because Claim 25 depends from an allowable independent claim, it is allowable for the same reasons that make the corresponding independent claim allowable.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the claims of the pending application are now in condition for allowance over the cited references. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections and objections, allowance, and early passage through issuance. If there are any remaining matters that may be handled by telephone conference, the Examiner is kindly invited to call the undersigned at his convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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MAIL CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this communication is being deposited with the United States Postal Service via first class mail under 37 C.F.R. § 1.08 on the date indicated below addressed to: MAIL STOP AMENDMENTS, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

2/14/02

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